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Renaissance Web TV: New Media Promoting Sphere Participation & Information Society Increasing Innovative Business Practices

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New Media Promoting Public Sphere Participation
&
Information Society Increasing Innovative Business Practices

By Joanna James

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APPROVAL OF THESIS

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By Joanna James

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ABSTRACT

New media have emerged over the last decade and are increasingly changing business practices within the media industry. Specifically this creative project addresses some of the challenges the television market is encountering, and how it is currently in the process of migrating to the World Wide Web. During this transitional moment in technology, this creative project introduces the proposal for Renaissance Web TV, an interactive Web platform that creates and produces its own original broadcast quality programming for the Web. This is an opportune moment to enter into the television market through Web video. This creative project explores how a "Webchannel" could use the art of storytelling with informative, cultural and entertaining shows, to engage viewers in social responsibility and activism.

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Chapter 1 – INTRODUCTION:

We are encountering a transformative media environment where mass communication including the Internet, telecommunications, cable and radio are converging into more effective, accessible delivery systems based on technology. Television programming is migrating to the World Wide Web, where people can attain global information and spread messages at record speed. Today, the majority of media programming is coming from cable and an ever-increasing amount from the Internet; concurrently, traditional media are building delivery systems online to sustain themselves. As Marshall McLuhan (1964) asserted nearly half a century ago, "the medium is the message." Throughout the course of history, technological tools to communicate have been powerful agents shaping society and cultural fibers from the marketplace to the political arena.

The Internet and current online platforms have revolutionized the information age shattering barriers and hierarchies, encouraging individuals to not only consume information, but also create it and share it on a massive scale through the creation of Web 2.0. In 2006, the social networking term Web 2.0 was first coined by technical book publisher Tim O'Reilly, emphasizing user-generated content and communication between people over the Web (Lacy, 2008). O'Reilly believes that this evolution of the Web is a "tool for harnessing collective intelligence… This is an amazing revolution in human augmentation" (Waters, 2008). This open channel for creating, posting, consuming and sharing content by, and for all people, has eliminated barriers, now allowing individuals to become active participants in processes that were once prohibited. This self-empowerment is the impetus to break into traditional media roles that were once only available to a limited group of trained professionals. Whether as citizen journalists on the blogosphere, photographers on Flickr, cinematographers on YouTube, or

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advertisement and publicity from MySpace and Facebook — these collective efforts have transcended the industry such that traditional media outlets have been forced to add new applications, and make significant changes to keep pace.

The media have considered new, effective ways to cope with this technological change. For example, major national newspapers have adopted successful online versions that have attracted a record 62.8 million unique visitors in 2007, which was more than a 6 percent increase from 2006 (NAA, 2008). These numbers are promising, considering that in the early 2000s the fate of newspaper readership appeared very dismal. Although newspapers nationwide have added new media applications to retain readers, they have not been adept at restructuring their business model to sustain costs and increase profits. There has been a decline over the past several years in circulation, subscriptions and advertisement revenue, even with a rising online and print readership (Choate, 2008). Meanwhile, more than 90 percent of newspapers continue to rely on their print product for their main source of revenue (Carr, 2008). The print news industry must evaluate how to best evolve its business structure to increase necessary revenues to survive. Other than required business foresight, newspapers must take into account that their youth readership remains extremely low and must reposition themselves in order to attract a younger audience. According to the search engine Technorati, there are approximately 112.8 million worldwide blogs with more than 50 percent of the online audience reading, and youth is a big factor in that equation (Lacy, 2008).

Overall, the general media have not made significant modifications to benefit from the full scope of the Internet. Equally important, traditional media outlets have not yet fully reached out to young adults, ignoring a segment of the population that is increasingly paying attention to current affairs. From a business perspective, it is illogical to not target and capitalize on the

largest using Internet audience. According to the Pew Internet and American Life Project, the

highest Internet usage by age cohorts is 87 percent of U.S. teens between 12-17 (Moskalyuk,
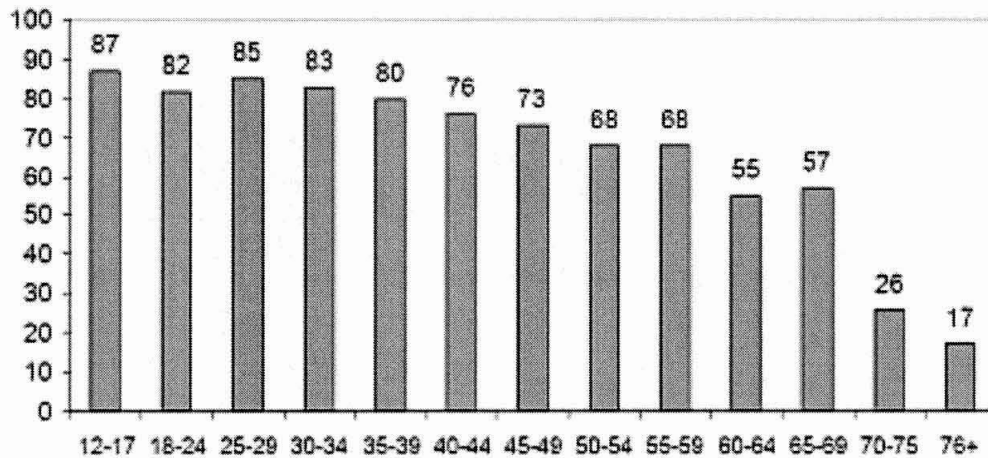
2008).

Figure 1: Pew Internet and American Life Project, January 2006

The global impact of Web 2.0 on a generation of young adults is making more and more

businesses take this demographic into consideration. Companies realize that they must determine

how to engage young people with their services, products or messages on a global level (Hamm,

2007). John Poisson, CEO of a real-time photo and video sharing service on the Web, was

inspired to start his company after observing the mobile craze of Japan's youth (Hamm, 2007).

Poisson not only realized that mobile computing would be the next major entertainment

platform, but that he could use the new generation to create much of the entertainment. Two of

the most important factors are: that program viewership is increasingly shifting from television

to mobile devices through the Internet; and this younger generation is leading the way for a new

viewing platform.

Television is encountering a huge decrease in viewing numbers and many speculate that

it is the next market to be influenced by the Internet. According to Malik (2007), a recent IBM

survey of consumer digital media and entertainment habits demonstrates that video watching on the Internet rivals television viewing, and increasingly viewers prefer mobile content. Moreover, researchers and entertainment industry experts predict that a shift is happening in the video market similar to that of the mobile phone replacing the landline telephone (Malik, 2007). "The Internet is becoming consumers' primary entertainment source," said Saul Berma, an entertainment strategist at IBM, "The TV is increasingly taking a back seat to the cell phone and the personal computer among consumers age 18 to 34" (Malik, 2007). Although some effects are already evident, once there is a more common viewing alternative offered on the Web, network executives will be forced to join the new medium. Internet icons and entertainment leaders are preparing for the enormous transformation of receiving and viewing television through the Internet, which is predicted to occur in the near future. I personally see the opportunity to make an early entrance into the World Wide Web television market. With the previous impact of blogs on print media, an analogous situation is likely to occur with television. It is expected that there will be an abundance of short films, documentaries, news segments and programming that will create a new Web platform dedicated to television viewing online. The personal creations and video streaming of YouTube was not the beginning of this movement, it was merely a glimpse.

With this impending transformation, there is an opportunity to create a television network on the Internet utilizing the abundant, and currently untapped resource, which is a talented and passionate youth. Specifically, my thesis involves the creation of Renaissance Web TV (Renwebchannel.com), an actual television network designed for the Web, creating and producing its own original, broadcast quality programs that are informative, cultural and entertaining. The multimedia Web platform also provides a Web 2.0 landscape for users to become empowered, share their voices and collectively transform the role of mainstream media.

As a Web video platform, Renwebchannel.com will bring relevant public issues to the forefront, with the goal of establishing a social movement for awareness and participation through blogs, live chats, video conferencing, Skype and various other methods for interactivity and communication on a massive scale. This new species of "Webchannel" will provide original programming accessed *On-Demand,* in conjunction with Web 2.0 social interactivity among users.

Renwebchannel.com will unleash the professionalism and creativity of a modest sized staff, but will rely primarily on network relationships with universities, organizations, businesses and non-profits. In addition, the general public has a vital role to play in reinforcing the mission of Renaissance Web TV, by becoming aware of important social issues and actively participating beyond the viewing experience. Viewers will be encouraged to discuss shows and create or support their own movements through their own personal profile pages. The overall purpose of Renaissance Web TV is to promote public participation through its strategic programming, and the collaboration of the current spheres of online communication as a means to organize viewers to contribute to society.

Chapter 2 - LITERATURE REVIEW:

The relevant literature consists of three fields of study: 1) Internet applications, trends and businesses; 2) Theory and global information communication technologies; and 3) Web 2.0. Although information on theory and Internet media trends is currently available via peer reviewed academic journals, information on the most current business trends and innovations is predominantly found in the mass media (e.g., newspapers, business and technology magazines, trade journals, texts, and the online community, including blogs).

2.1 Trade Journals:

Currently, Web professionals and business columnists are analyzing and discussing the role of online social networks and whether they have a future as lucrative Web startups. For example, Kharif (2008) assesses the current climate of Web 2.0 startups and the increase in funding for them, while Hamm (2007) discusses the generation of global youth who use online social networks, blogs and streaming videos and the impact this has on businesses and marketing. In addition, Lacy (2008) comprehensively analyzes the business decisions of the last generation of key players in Ecommerce and Web 2.0; she intersects significant points of time throughout the history of the Internet with the paths of renowned Web entrepreneurs.

Urstadt (2008) and Waters (2008) discuss the future of Web 2.0 concerned with the economics of social media. Both speak with technology innovators and luminaries in Web 2.0 and dissect popular and up-and-coming social networking sites. Rose (2008) and Tanz (2008) discuss different aspects of Web 2.0 connected to Hollywood, ranging from personal branding and marketing to how Web video is becoming popular in some Hollywood circles.

Several authors also focus on the empowering role technology and Web 2.0 are playing for individuals to start their own entertainment businesses online. For example, Yehuda (2008) discusses the "rapid expansion of next generation communications, such as social networking, video sharing and Web 2.0" in relation to the mobile phone. Klaassen (2007) and Creamer (2007) deal with successful advertising techniques and innovations to implement in order to attract more sources of revenue. Lastly, Walsh (2008), a CASBAA consultant, presented a list of ten important factors of mobile TV at a CASBAA Convention in 2007. The presentation is offered online, and mentions an eleventh element to the list which was the "wild card of the Internet."

An analysis of popular Web video sites and television programs consistent with Renaissance Web TV's mission was conducted. Good, Revision3, ForaTV, Mogolus.com, and other video streaming websites with television programming are studied to remain current with any new developments and useful information. The sites represent successful models to consider for site structure and video streaming. Regarding television programming, Balas (2003) offers an extensive analysis on the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS). In reviewing business models and strategies Balas (2003) provides insight into issues of funding to program strategies and obstacles PBS faced over the course of its history.

The dichotomy between globalization and information communication technologies are examined as a means to consider future business structures for new media and its relationship towards society. Youngs and Allison (2008) explain how globalization, communications and political action need to be analyzed interactively, acknowledging the diverse roles technologies are contributing to new institutional forms. In addition, Friedman (2005) emphasizes a level competitive playing field as a result of globalization and the convergence of Internet and

business creating new economic structures. Lastly, Pew Internet and American Life Project contains valuable statistics on Internet trends; *The New York Times, Business Weekly, Variety* and *Technology Review* are invaluable tools for program proposals and technology innovations and trends; several blogs are frequently referred to, particularly Technorati and TechCrunch.

2.2 Theory:

The term public sphere was coined by the German philosopher and sociologist Jurgen Habermas in 1962 (De La Piscina, 2007). Habermas analyzed the origin of the public sphere from the "polis" within Greece's classical era, throughout early European civilization, to capitalism and civic society during his day (Habermas, 1989). As later interpreted by Olvera, "the public sphere is the social place where citizens process opinions, pass judgments, lodge requests to the State, and receive and interpret information through the mass media" (De La Piscina, 2007, p. 64). It is inclusive in principle, enticing people to participate and exercise their freedom of speech and expression on topics and issues of concern. According to Goodnight (1982), the public sphere can be revitalized through a harmonious participation of the three spheres of argument, with one not overpowering the other: the personal sphere, the technical sphere and the public sphere of argument (Goodnight, 1982). The personal sphere relates directly to each person's own experience and has no requirements for inclusion; the technical sphere relates to knowledge and experience in specific fields through formal education and acquisition into trained fields, which makes it very selective to enter; and the public sphere is in the pursuit for the common good with policies to better the future through discourse and debate (Fabj & Sobnosky, 1995).

Goodnight's theory on the three spheres of argument relates to current online communication, which is decisive on how much of a role the Internet can play in increasing public sphere participation. There is a state of three separate spheres online that mirrors the three spheres of argument. However, these three spheres are scattered and are not in collaboration with one another, which stifles the full function the Internet could play in rejuvenating the public sphere. The three main spheres online that compare to Goodnight's (1982) three spheres of argument are: 1) Personal Sphere: Social networking sites (e.g., Facebook, Myspace, YouTube, Twitter); 2) Technical Sphere: College, Professional, Research Forums/Networks; and 3) Public Sphere: Blogosphere

The personal sphere parallels open social networking sites that operate as inclusive places for the general public (e.g., the largest two user-generated sites, MySpace and Facebook). Individuals join these sites primarily to communicate with friends or express themselves. As such, this level of comfortable interaction and effortless entry is similar to that of the personal sphere.

The technical sphere corresponds to professional sites focused on specific fields, including science, research, colleges/universities and business environments. These sites target individuals with experience in specific areas to become exclusive members. They are less inclusive given that all members must be experts in particular fields, participate, and provide professional feedback. The personal and technical sphere may overlap at times. For example, the music industry relies on MySpace, despite the fact that the site has no formal association with the industry, thereby indicating the inadvertent collaboration between the technical and personal spheres.

There are a number of examples of the public sphere online from the impact of the blogosphere. Bloggers have generated a great deal of attention on stories that mainstream media have overlooked or ignored, such that public outcry pressured the press to re-examine them. One prime example of how bloggers culminated public support and ultimately influenced change is the resignation of Mississippi Senator Trent Lott in 2002 (Scott, 2004). Lott made remarks at the 100th birthday party of South Carolina Senator Strom Thurmond, praising Thurmond's 1948 run for the Presidency as the candidate of the segregationist Dixiecrat Party (Scott, 2004). There was no initial firestorm over the controversial remarks because major news outlets did not report the story. However, bloggers remained persistent with the coverage; and soon after, mainstream print and television press joined in, ultimately resulting in Lott's resignation from the Senate (Scott, 2004).

The blogosphere has exemplified its public sphere connotation throughout renowned historical moments such as the 2005 Tsunami and Hurricane Katrina, to unearthing political scandal during elections and the broad "collective intelligence" available from such a wide distribution (Surowiecki, 2008). The blogosphere may have the power to garner attention and influence action, however, its power is limited without the full collaboration of the three spheres of online communication uniting and organizing information with purpose.

There is an abundance of information and communication on the Internet, which is utilized in a variety of ways. Although the vast amount of information that is available online should not be considered a negative factor, there may be a viable concern that there is an information overload. Could excessive streams of knowledge, constant and burdensome professional networks and inundated feeds of blogs, be deterring people from an exploration of knowledge and promote information intimidation? This question raises the issue that this

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scattered sense of information and communication may be leading towards an unorganized frenzy of online search tactics and interactions without full comprehension. The increasingly popular scanning method of attaining and conveying information may be halting the overall learning process because of a lack of engagement.

A recent YouTube video illustrates a presentation to Google employees called "No Time To Think," in which the author advocates for the creation of digital places that foster contemplative thinking and analysis, as for example, a park or library does (Levy, 2008). New applications and the modification of existing ones should be created to form more collaborative online communities that combine the technical, personal and public spheres to cultivate a cyclical learning process. Innovative online solutions must be developed to combat surface level social interactions, fast information searches and one-way discussions. It is necessary to improve sites through interactive and mindful features, new technologies, organization and purpose to encourage the complete processing of information into knowledge, and avoid this increasing pattern of constant scanning.

Renaissance Web TV will become a community that balances the personal, technical and public spheres of argument and online communication to elicit participation and collaboration from all three. Site visitors will not just rapidly scan information, but actually process it into knowledge and contribute to it. In essence, Renaissance Web TV is modeled after the classroom environment of a popular college professor. These are the courses that typically close during the first day of registration because students via word-of mouth have discussed how wonderful the professor is based on his/her teaching method. This is the case of the professor who creates an environment that facilitates participation, dialogue, and mutual exchange of information and knowledge as opposed to lecturing. There is a level of trust, inclusiveness, and cooperation that

is expressed between the professor and students. Trust that the professor teaches important information that the students will need, but simultaneously the professor welcomes students' ideas and feedback; the professor trusts that the students will come to class prepared and desire to interact and provide feedback. Inclusiveness such that everyone feels welcomed and encouraged to participate in the classroom experience. There is no technical elite or personal informality overtaking the classroom; rather, an open, balanced, cooperative learning experience exists.

As previously indicated, there are many existing forums, chatrooms and online communication tools. As such, Renaissance Web TV is not "creating the wheel", but rather it is aimed at improving it, using the classroom metaphor as a model in achieving its goal. The Information Society believes that new media can create a new public sphere, which is politically active and conscientious. Although the Information Society, as a theory, has a relatively short history, it encapsulates the current technological transition that is affecting industry and society. American sociologist Daniel Bell (1999) was one of the earliest theorists who forecast that the 'raw material' of human occupations in the post-industrial society would be information, as opposed to muscle and capital, which dominated previous industries. One of Bell's landmark books, *The Coming of the Post Industrial Society*, stresses the decline of industry and manufacturing and the emergence of the social structure representing "new principles of innovations, new modes of social organization and new classes in society" (Bell, p.XI). Bell introduces the "knowledge theory of value" which confronts the capitalistic "labor theory of value," by classifying data as a raw product that turns into information and ultimately reaches knowledge (Bell, 1999). This assessment of the post-industrial society and its implications

relating to the new information society shifts the debate towards the role new information and communication technologies can play in transforming society.

According to the Pew Internet and American Life Institute, more than 75 percent of Americans use the Internet. The challenge facing the 21st century is not getting people to participate, as much as creating new online platforms that will get people engaged. Engaged beyond current social interactions and information searches, onto purposeful dialogues and contributions towards community organization and societal responsibility. Moreover, sites that facilitate horizontal, multilayer discussions to ultimately shape policies, proposals, research, development and social action by directly communicating with legitimate branches of corporations, NGOs or multinational corporations, as well as local, state and federal governments. Since the access and availability to information has arrived, it is now progressing forward to transparency and clarity, fostering innovation.

It is imperative to prevent the erosion of the public sphere from the "twentieth century American life" which Goodnight (1982) explained as the elevation of the personal and technical groundings of argument (Goodnight, p. 223). Goodnight points to a progressive historian, Charles Beard, who believed that the nature of government was being transformed into "an economic and technical business on a large scale" taking away the common citizen's possibility to participate in democratic self-government more and more (Goodnight, p. 224). Although new platforms on the Internet are attempting to re-establish democratic self-government, along with an increasing level of American awareness and participation in government, it was less than a decade ago that "American life" regressed towards an acceptance of an elite, aristocratic ruling. Presently, the U.S. economy is in a state of recession that has cost hundreds of billions of dollars towards rescue packages for large companies. Economist Dr. Henry Kaufman called the current

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economic situation the "worst recession in the post- World War II period" (Siegel, 2008). Kaufman expressed his major concern that "when there is substantial financial turmoil, there is a serious risk of ending the middle class – and that could produce major political shifts" (Siegel, 2008).

There is a growing sentiment leading to the cross-national epidemic of the "Haves and Have-Nots." A Pew Research Poll indicates that a rapidly growing share of the public, nearly half of Americans, believe American society is grouped into two economic divides of the "Haves and Have-Nots" (Jodie, 2007). Aristotle believed that, "the most perfect political community is one in which the middle class is in control, and outnumbers both of the other classes." The United States is in a current financial struggle, making it more difficult for the middle class; meanwhile the cost for higher education is spiraling out of control. For more than two decades, colleges and universities across the nation have been raising tuition at a faster rate than any other product or service, so that the amount American families pay for tuition has skyrocketed 439 percent since 1982 (Wang, 2008). Yet, through technology there is a ray of hope. The Internet has become the revolutionary technological tool over the last century that has helped begin to level the playing field, with the chance for the middle class's voice to be heard. From an overwhelmingly frustrated majority over what has happened during the last decade, individuals are paying attention once again and utilizing the Internet to express themselves. Socially, the middle class has never been afforded such intellectual freedom for growth and opportunity. It is vital for technology, media and people participation to grow together in this innovative period and foster mutual exchange.

The growth of the Internet has increased tremendously worldwide in terms of number of users, its capacity for communication, and the amount of knowledge "at one's fingertip".

However, it must continue to develop its full potential as an agent to mobilize social and political action. The Internet is ideal for activities such as Ecommerce, information searches, social interactivity, and connecting individuals globally. However, its role needs to be harnessed with regards to encouraging public sphere participation on local, national, and global levels and avoid the commercialized path of television and the telecommunications industry.

Harold Innis, a Canadian social scientist from the Technology Determinism school of communication, warned against new technologies' commercial context, and how they become like most vehicles of the press, used by private sector interests to deepen the emergence of monopolization (Comer, 2001). It is crucial that media conglomerates do not gain privileged access and control online, forcing ordinary citizens to relinquish their current Internet access to information and participation. More than 60 percent of online content is created by citizens as opposed to corporations, unlike television which has zero individual created content (Lessig & McChesney, 2006). As long as the Internet continues to remain a platform for the people, by the people, it can prevent media monopolies from dictating the flow of information. This is where new Web media platforms like Renaissance Web TV have the ability to penetrate media agendas and impede monopolistic business habits that have taken over. One of the goals of Renwebchannel.com is to make media more interactive and democratic maintaining steadfast devotion to its principles of social awareness and responsibility.

Chapter 3 – JUSTIFICATION:

Web TV is an exciting frontier that has tremendous potential for growth as a medium providing original, full-length programming as a new viewing experience. Since there has not been much ventured in the direction thus far, this thesis introduces the notion of a "Webchannel" that advocates for public sphere participation through its entertaining and thought provoking content, while combining social interactivity from Web 2.0. It will join the infant stages of Internet television providers creating its own original, professionally produced content for a target audience between the ages of 18 and 34, which could potentially expand to a wider age bracket. This new mode of content delivery offered through the Internet will drastically change television viewing, production and business practices. There will be more business opportunities in production and filmmaking given that technology has increased affordability, providing additional opportunities and options for hosting and exposure.

According to the Pew Internet and American Life Project, the Internet has already become a popular host of video streaming; considering the following statistics:

- 75 percent use the Internet to watch or download some type of online video
- 62 percent online video viewers say their favorite videos are professionally produced
- 57 percent online video viewers share links to the videos they find with others
- 76 percent of young adults aged between 18-29 watch online video

Renwebchannel.com has determined that one way to harness significant social change is to improve the existing media system by making it more independent, interactive and informative. Renaissance Web TV promotes the notion of participatory learning and community action through a dual purpose: 1) Inform and inspire viewers with its content and its multimedia

platform for discussion and a call to action; 2) Provide a platform for individuals to host and share their own content, ultimately breaking into media hierarchies and barriers.

There is ample room to improve, innovate and increase the capacity and facility for average citizens to horizontally participate in the decision-making process. This can be accomplished by directly and actively participating in all aspects of media, from news to film, radio and television. As an online social networking community, Renwebchannel.com will encourage people to share their views with the entire site's viewers and celebrate it through viewers' profile pages.

The term Renaissance translates to rebirth, and that is what is literally the goal of Renwebchannel.com — bringing new life to programming and delivery compared to the current lackluster content of television programming. Much like the cultural movement that spread throughout Europe in the 14th century bridging the Middle Ages to the Modern Era, Renaissance Web TV is designed as an informative, cultural and entertaining online network that bridges the technological age to the global, information society. In addition, Renaissance Web TV acts as a public forum inspiring a well-learned, multifaceted viewer who will contribute to society unleashing the Internet's potential for civic engagement.

The Webchannel focuses on topics including: arts, politics, social activism, technology and the environment. Shows can be viewed wherever, whenever and on a variety of devices. Although current television programming exists in a "500 channel universe," broadcast and cable television continue to struggle with ratings and the overall viewing population. The basic broadcast networks' viewing has dramatically decreased for more than 20 years, and although cable stations consecutively increased viewership in the late 90s, that same pattern does not hold true today (Brown, 1998). Some contend that the low turnout of viewers reflects the lack of

creative and various genre themed programs offered, or a lack of understanding of what the

television audience wants. Network executives, however, argue that with new television viewing

techniques such as the World Wide Web and DVRs, the audience is still there, but the

measurement methods need to change to incorporate those viewers who aren't watching the

programs in "real life" television (Steinberg, 2007). Earlier research conducted in the 80s

revealed that viewing habits pointed toward a ritualistic or habitual use of television dependent

on the clock rather than by program type (McCarty, 2007). Network loyalty has suffered due to

the technological accessibility and availability to watch television programs anytime through

online streaming or DVR devices, rather than only on the networks' schedule. The changing

television environment, however, reinforces that current audience viewing is more selective

based on programs, genres and primarily their personal convenience rather than a network's

schedule (TNS, 2007).

   With more Internet television shows expected to appear over the next couple of years,

despondent television viewers will have more opportunity for satisfaction against the failing

television ailments mentioned above. An *On-demand* style channel allows viewers to watch

whichever shows they choose, whenever they want and wherever they are. One of the most

effective benefits to using the Internet for television viewing is the mobility of the experience.

Whether individuals are on their daily commute from work or waiting for an appointment, they

can view these programs on their cell phones, iPods, or other mobile devices of their choosing.

   Particularly with television, a Web video platform alleviates former television constraints

and media monopolies demands. People can now produce and watch programs on a Web video

platform, affording themselves and prospective production companies the chance to provide a

new and more interactive viewing experience (Yehuda, 2008). The social interactive experience

of Web 2.0 supports a sense of community for users to feel connected and participate in a public forum. The potential for Web video is promising considering the way mobile video has been received. According to Nielsen Mobile's 2007 report, there has been a 198 percent increase in mobile video revenue and 155 percent increase in mobile video subscribers – and that is only 3.6 percent of the entire mobile market (Yehuda, 2008). There are eMarketer projections that mobile television subscribers will number 462 million by 2012 (Yehuda, 2008). Renwebchannel.com is poised to take part in this mobile market in addition to essentially being a Web video platform.

A consultant with CASBAA, an Asian cable and broadcast advocacy group promoting multi-channel television including wireless video, offered a top ten list for mobile television success. Many of these tools parallel similar themes for Web video including a network with lots of bandwidth, an easy navigated design and user-friendly site, consistent coverage and reception, fair price, a strong brand based on content, and staying informed on the regulations since this is currently an open frontier unlike the FCC and governmental involvement with television (Walsh, 2007). Although this presentation targeted mobile video, the eleventh tip was considered the "wild card" which should be paid attention to: the Internet. If the average Asian is already watching 129 minutes of television on their mobile phone every day, the transition to Web video platforms deem well (Walsh, 2007).

Web video is capturing Hollywood's attention, albeit somewhat late and slow, it is moving in that direction. Last year some of the celebrity mavericks signing onto Web video projects included former Disney CEO Michael Eisner who launched a teen drama and comedian Will Ferrell who signed onto a sort of YouTube for comedy (Rose, 2008). Although there is no set business model in place for this new frontier, this "undiscovered country" devoid of rules and regulations, the novel nature of it seems to appeal to two stereo-types: the young, cutting-edge

filmmaker/producer and the experienced yet savvy entertainment executive restless for a new direction. According to technology writer Frank Rose, "once the major brands get on board, millions of ad dollars will follow... At the same time the fact that a three-minute clip can be shot for as little as $2,000 means Web video will be more open to ambitious neophytes than television ever was" (Rose, 2008, p. 131). Combine successful niche Web video with a Web 2.0 landscape and there is a recipe for constantly attracting an audience. The most successful Web 2.0 sites not only welcome users, but also offer them a plethora of ways for self-expression and communication. This type of access into all kinds of professional fields, whether it is blogging, music, photo sharing or video sharing, is changing the dynamics of traditional industries, decentralizing concentrations of power and the way executives conduct business.

At the college/university level, Web 2.0 is being used well beyond students' Facebook pages, in which faculty are using it as a teaching tool. At Washington State University (WSU), a faculty member and assistant developed a framework for an electronic portfolio to help explain a complex field for engineering students using Wikis, social networks, video mashups and other Web-based resources (Waters, 2008). Although WSU graduate Kelley Racicot believed she used the new technologies effectively in the classroom, she added, "I don't yet see these technologies being used to their full potential" (Waters, 2008, p. 45). Renwebchannel.com plans to utilize the brilliance and talent of students and faculty in colleges/universities across the nation to encourage social movements that promote learning and public participation through the help of Web 2.0.

This outpouring of citizen involvement ranges from the impact YouTube has had between voters and politicians, Twitter and political expression, to the efficient use of marketing and publicity from Facebook and MySpace. Every day YouTube receives more than 100,000

uploads of video, while both MySpace and Facebook have more than a 100 million active users worldwide each month (Urstadt, 2008). Although Mark Zuckerberg created Facebook from his Harvard dorm room as a way for the student body to connect with one another, within a few months colleges across the nation signed on, and soon after it became available to the general public. These astronomical numbers of daily unique visitors to the likes of Facebook, MySpace and YouTube are ultimately a target audience for spreading marketing messages and brand recognition on a global level.

This social networking success is still considered in its infancy compared to the innovations and creative sources of revenue still being thought of. Last year, Web 2.0 businesses raised $1.34 billion in venture capital funding, an 87 percent increase from 2006 (Kharif, 2008).
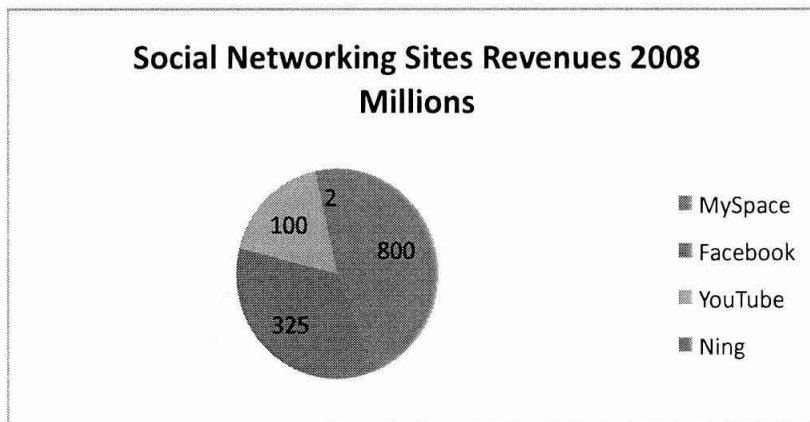
Social Networking Sites Revenues 2008 Millions

Pie chart values: 2, 100, 800, 325

Legend:
- MySpace
- Facebook
- YouTube
- Ning

Figure 2: Successful Social Networking Sites

Print media has suffered significant revenue losses from the shift of advertising to the Internet. By the year 2011, researchers forecast that print and online advertisement will be evenly matched, and soon after online revenues will surpass print (Lacy, 2008). Currently, social media Websites are only getting 6 percent of the online advertising dollars, however within this tremendous shift of online advertising mentioned above there is a $40 billion opportunity for new Web companies. E-Marketers predict that worldwide advertisement spending on social

networks will hit $3.63 billion by 2010, while the U.S. alone will bring in $2.515 billion for that same year (Klaassen, 2007).

One of the main reasons social networks are appealing to advertisers is the ease and accessibility for direct marketing given the vast amount of user data. Social networks digitize identities from all the information they receive from their users and store it, whether it is someone's favorite book and movie or who that person would most likely befriend (Lacy, 2008). These sophisticated target schemes facilitate tailored advertisement geared towards specific audiences. Moreover, advertisers have the potential to spread messages or product-awareness to hundreds of millions of users on those sites.

Although there are benefits to advertising on massively popular social networking sites, the empirical evidence does not support the claim for sites with more than 100 million page views per month during the present state of financial affairs. This is primarily due to the turbulent economic times offline with an overall softening of the advertising market online (Miller, 2008). According to PubMatic, an online advertising publishing company, ads on social networks "fetched the smallest price per thousand eyeballs" during the second quarter of this year, down 22 percent (Miller, 2008). With the financial crisis looming, companies would rather place ads on small Web sites with niche content that get fewer than 1 million page views per month because advertisers can reach a more targeted audience (Miller, 2008). These smaller sites sold three times as much ad space than the larger sites, and were paid "61 cents per 1,000 eyeballs" compared to 18 cents on larger sites. This type of opportunity bodes well for small startups breaking into the industry, which is rare for television. This is just another example of an area on the Internet that welcomes the individual as opposed to the corporation, and how audience is becoming just as significant as revenue.

A recent article in *The New York Times* stated, "Internet start-ups are drawing investment based on their ability to build an audience, not bring in revenue..." (Allison & Youngs, 2008, p. 5). For globalization and communication scholars, this new shift prompts the question of whether *audience* is becoming the new form of revenue (Alison & Youngs, 2008). Reverting back to the Information Society, Spanish sociologist Manuel Castells raises the significant value between the interactions of technological and social changes. Castells (1996) believes that society is becoming increasingly decentralized and interdependent, defined by "networked social relations," as opposed to previous hierarchical forms. Therefore, individuals and institutions would function largely through their interactive networks, and transcend traditional loyalties and professional boundaries. Information is clearly being circulated at much higher rates, "in almost every sphere of social life" and connecting people across space and distance (Knowledge Politics Quarterly, 2008). Rather than continue the approach of upward mobility through hierarchies and cost driven demand, Renwebchannel.com aims to cultivate partnerships for social expansion and larger audiences.

Renwebchannel.com considers the use of networking relations as an enormous business advantage regarding programming and production. Renwebchannel.com will strategically partner with the private and public sectors from non-profits, community organizations, newspapers, and businesses, to develop programs with the assistance of colleges/universities in the production process. Undergraduate and graduate school students are to be used in a variety of capacities, promoting participation and learning outside of the classroom. Students from across the nation will be hired as interns for content development, writing, hosts, cinematography and editing. This is a mutually beneficial arrangement for all participants. Students gain experience, improved skills, exposure, and add to their resume building to increase their possibilities for

future employment. Organizations and businesses will have the incentive to participate given they share similar interests for their causes or specific mission in regard to the programs they would develop at little or no cost to them. Organizations receive publicity and exposure for themselves and their causes, emphasizing once again the need for a larger audience. Thus, the programming demands of Renaissance Web TV are alleviated, while a lower budget is maintained for content development and technical production, while ensuring the highest standards of quality. While maintaining the relatively low labor costs through this arrangement, notwithstanding the initial start-up costs, a portion of the generated revenue will be donated to causes selected by the participating organizations in a fundraising effort to eliminate the "digital divide" in both developing countries and the United States.

Networks and social collaboration are ever-present, especially with the open-source system of the free software movement Linux. Linus Torvalds, Finnish software engineer first created Linux as a college student with a hobby. Two decades later, the freely distributed software has become a popular movement that exists based on individuals contributing to it and improving it for free (Linuxonline, 2007). Irving Wladawsky-Berger, IBM's vice president for technical strategy and innovation, summarized open-sourcing: "This emerging era is characterized by the collaborative innovation of many people working in gifted communities just as innovation in the industrial era was characterized by individual genius" (Friedman, 2005, p. 93). These significant changes in business practices and structures may be chipping away at the basic structure of capitalism, as we know it. In 2004, the *Economist* pondered whether this approach would transcend into other industries, that "some zealots even argue the open-source approach represents a new, post-capitalist model of production" (Friedman, 2005, p. 103). Therefore, one of the most crucial factors to creating new online businesses may be forming

relationships based on service and information commodities to gain larger audiences, rather than upward mobility and monetary payment.

Even in terms of advertising dollars, audience plays a significant role beyond the number of people exposed to the product. This is where corporations have the opportunity to demonstrate their social responsibility through their business choices and alliances, donations and investments, and the overall message they represent to an audience. Corporate social responsibility is when organizations consider the interests of society by taking responsibility for the impact of their activities on customers, suppliers, employees, shareholders, community and the environment (Wikipedia, 2008). Corporations see the obligation they carry beyond statutory law, to voluntarily take further steps to improve the quality of life for employees, the local community and society at large. Starbucks is a prime example of a company that takes its message of corporate responsibility seriously, having been recognized as one of the "Twenty most admired companies in America" by *Fortune* magazine each year from 2003-2007. As published in its 2007 annual Corporate Social Responsibility Report (CSRAR), Starbucks has assessed its five material issues of greatest importance to its company and shareholders: Coffee Purchasing Practices (e.g., coffee farmers/suppliers); Health & Wellness (e.g., nutritional information), Workplace Practices (e.g., culture & benefits); Growth & Expansion (e.g., local communities); and Environmental Impacts (e.g., paper cups, energy consumption).

According to Starbucks' (2008) CSRAR, 86 percent of customers surveyed remained loyal to Starbucks and recommended Starbucks because they prefer to do business with a company they believe to be socially responsible. One of the main ways the Seattle-based coffee company has shown its corporate responsibility decisions is in its partnerships and causes that it affiliates with. One of the partnerships in particular is with a socially conscious magazine named

Good. At every Starbucks location, *Good* offers a miniature recyclable paper pamphlet that succinctly discusses an important issue each week, including: the economy, oil prices, health care, and the environment. The version of *Good* magazine that is available by subscription has the majority of its advertisement full of corporate responsibility messages highlighting social issues and support. With this, Starbucks is associating itself with a "hip," socially aware magazine that promotes a variety of causes. These are the types of business practices that Renaissance Web TV is working to employ. Corporate responsibility is yet another method in approaching companies for advertisement pitches for partnerships and collaboration. But it is also a magnificent opportunity for Renaissance Web TV to further show what the company stands for in its principles, and how it actively works to bring those ideals to fruition. Renaissance Web TV intends to develop its own campaign to: "End the Digital Divide Here and There" through Digital Community Learning Centers.

3.1 Business Model:

Individuals must believe that they have a stake in securing the site's mission and success. A structured, grassroots effort must be created from the start to garner support and participation via donations and word of mouth. Revenue that Renwebchannel.com generates will have a compounded value from maintaining such low labor costs from networks and social relations. Renwebchannel.com believes it has created an efficient and innovative business model that generates multiple streams of revenue in order to offer quality material that won't be jeopardized by special interests or media monopolies. However, one of the predominant factors for Renaissance Web TV's success will come from the viewers and supporters themselves. It is crucial to reach out to followers to emphasize the stake they hold in the business. Startup sites

across the board from online radio stations, video sites, to social networks, as well as more longstanding sites such as Linux and even Wikipedia itself appeal to their users for donations and support right on their homepage. Other than advertising and sponsorships, product placement is deemed a sure way for revenue for Web video platforms from its "prominent branding opportunity" (Rose, 2008, p. 131).
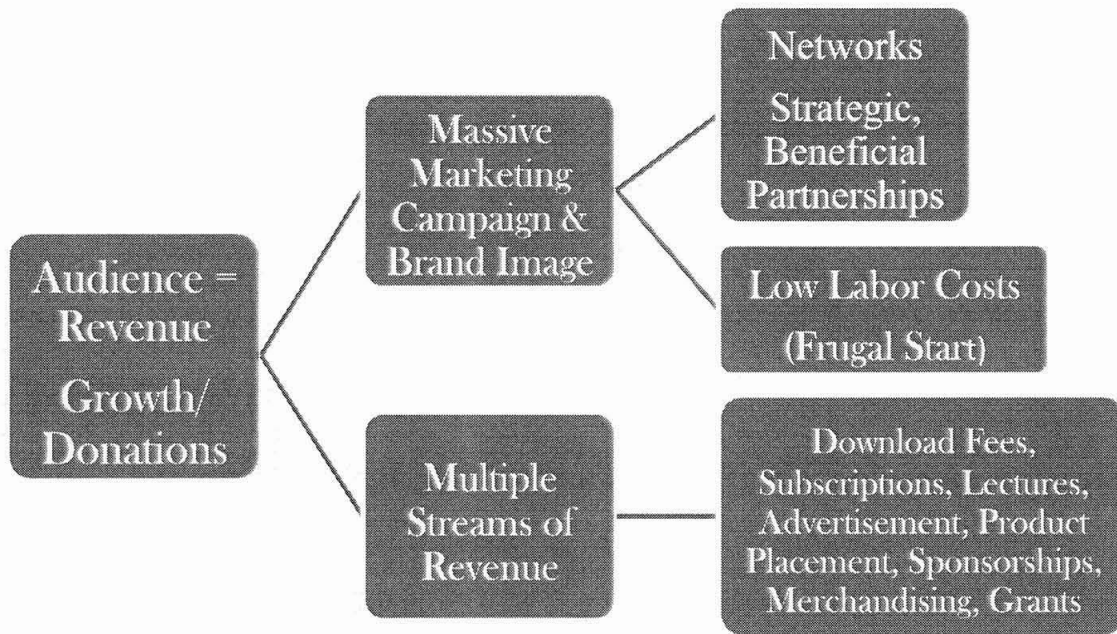

Figure 3: Renaissance Web TV Business Model

Another major source of revenue comes from the videos themselves. All initial viewing on Renwebchannel.com is free. Unlike YouTube, Renwebchannel.com will allow video downloads from the homepage for one's personal collection for a nominal fee. The videos are also available for sale and distribution as an additional source of revenue beyond downloading. The download or purchase of any videos from individuals' Webchannels will be another option. Members who post videos on their profile pages will have access to Paypal accounts where all purchase transactions occur, and an automatic amount is deducted for Renwebchannel.com as the

host. Other sources of income include: merchandising, licensing, lectures, job classifieds, grants, fundraising, philanthropy, and personal donations for receiving free services. The network relationships and multiple streams of revenue allow Renwebchannel.com to remain committed to its mission to encourage public participation, rather than be at the mercy of corporate interests.

The business paradigm of PBS acts as evidence for the need of a for profit structure that depends on multiple streams of revenue rather than exclusively from the government or corporations. Although the Public Broadcasting Service was founded on noble principles that early visionaries were dedicated to, constant financial hardships bred problems throughout the total structure of PBS from its editorial department to its leadership and direction. Unfortunately, PBS endured a series of systematic problems that impeded its original mission (Balas, 2003). The Carnegie Commission and Corporation for Public Broadcasting studies identified some of these problems including "a constant lack of money and funding which led to infighting at all levels, excessive bureaucracy, political and financial interference, declining program quality and a lack of leadership" (Balas, 21).

The overall obstacles that PBS faced are primarily due to its financial crisis, which created a lack of committed leadership and a lost mission (Balas, 2003). The 1967 commission also emphasized that programming was reaching out to large audiences, which was creating commercialized formats drifting away from its educational mission (Carnegie Commission on Educational Television, 1967). By trying to appeal to the masses, programming became "instructional" as opposed to "interactive and engaging" (Balas, 2003). Renaissance Web TV reaches out to different sectors in society through a wide variety of programming, operating on the notion that small pockets of people collectively create a large national audience, rather than resorting to commercialized homogenous programming. By utilizing the most advanced,

currently available technologies combined with the Internet, traditional costs are alleviated so that the product can be offered for free, without compromising the integrity of its mission and purpose. This also maintains the creative environment to enable greater participation rather than conservative hiring practices based on funding.

3.2 Business Analysis:

Renaissance Web TV's goal is to attract viewers and contributors who care about the state of society and desire to learn, discuss and contribute to its improvement. Although Renaissance Web TV appeals primarily to socially conscious individuals, the goal is also to inspire anyone who wants to learn and discuss social issues with the hope of encouraging civic-minded behavior and activism.

Although the various programs on Renaissance Web TV will attract a wide range of demographics and diverse audience, the Webchannel as a whole, will focus on a target audience as a way to capitalize on its marketing efforts. Further qualitative and quantitative research will help define the target audience. Through a relatively well-represented list of programs combined with a user-friendly site, Renaissance Web TV targets an audience consisting of both males and females ranging between 18 and 49 years of age. Shows will be designed such that they are inclusive and welcoming of different ethnicities, cultures, political ideologies and interests. Initially, a campaign specifically targeting the 18 to 34 age bracket focusing on college/university students, recent college/university graduates, and young professionals in urban/metropolitan areas will be launched in order to establish viewership and generate financial support. This approach is similar to the one utilized by Facebook's initial launch – a focus on

college/university students for initial exposure and then, through the aid of social networking sites, expand its brand to the general public.

Availability and accessibility are two main factors to attract individuals to Renaissance Web TV as a consumer product. Unlike current sites such as YouTube or Hulu, Renaissance Web TV prides itself on the ability of its users to have access to a comprehensive collection of specialized/niche programs under the umbrella of a single site with ease-of-access by its users to them. Efficient access to a variety of shows is a critical element that appeals to most individuals characterized by the following: time constraints; a lack of interest in tedious and cumbersome database searches; and desire for a user-friendly program menu similar to an effortless viewing experience found on such providers as *On-Demand*. Lastly, another advantage for students and professionals is the ease in transitioning from a site with original programming that they are interested in to social networking in order to maintain/facilitate communication with friends and family, with a higher probability of discussing social causes and the state of affairs.

Renaissance Web TV will distinguish itself from existing Web video or social networking sites because it combines the two platforms on one landscape, and provides the most advanced and high quality technologies for both. It is not merely a video format as much as an On-demand television structure. Rather, programming is created with social, informative themes, while being simultaneously entertaining to prevent humdrum stylistic errors.

Renaissance Web TV envisions itself as an HBO/PBS, which would target a broad audience, though initially focusing on an 18-34 year old demographic. The five strengths of HBO that Renaissance Web TV will emulate include: 1) On-demand format; 2) Artistically creative, uncensored, popular series; 3) No commercials during viewing 4) Wide ranging shows from dramas to documentaries; and 5) Brand image. After the series end of the Sopranos, one of

the most popular series in television history, executives planned to create less expensive, high volume niche series to attract broad audiences (Zeitchik, 2007). Executives realistically admitted that the days of "subscriptions by the millions" is over given the changing viewing habits largely influenced from the Web and increased cable accessibility. Some of the weaknesses of HBO include: a relatively expensive subscription service; relatively limited documentaries and informative programming; and a general lack of interactive services. Renaissance Web TV plans to initially offer free viewing services to generate brand awareness and loyalty, while later establishing a relatively inexpensive subscription service that would include viewing privileges as well as additional amenities.

One of the major strengths of PBS is through its educational programming and various documentaries that have provided the channel with an image of sophistication. Although programming is relatively generic without lavish effects or expensive filming techniques, the shows' overall substance and sequencing prove to be appealing to a broad audience. Despite this, PBS suffers from some weaknesses from an editorial perspective: the lack of demographical representation; sporadic features; lack of advertisement for new and existing shows (as well as schedules); and at times "out-of-touch" programming. Renaissance Web TV plans to combat outdated programming by having young, talented producers and writers who have a pulse on what is happening and how to express it in the most modern of terms. Renaissance Web TV benefits as a Web platform because it can utilize online applications that PBS cannot, such as user interactivity, shorter episodes with more images, variety in show structures, as well as satisfying current *On-demand* viewing habits.

The following comparison to Renaissance Web TV proves to be most similar in purpose and interests. The multimedia platform *Good* consists of a magazine, website, live events and

videos through a collaboration of individuals, businesses and nonprofits "pushing the world forward." It states that its target audience is "for people who give a damn (Good, 2008)." Two of *Good's* most obvious strengths that Renaissance Web TV will share are: its business collaboration/partnerships; and its emphasis on social issues in combination with an entertaining, "hip" style. The main platform for *Good* is its magazine that is based on a subscription basis. For 20 dollars, individuals can obtain an annual subscription in which 100 percent of the proceeds are allocated to a non-profit organization of their choice. *Good* appears to understand the visual "techno-culture" of new media and provides clever graphics, illustrations and picture messages on its Website as well as in its magazine. Rather than devote an entire page to a single article, *Good* illustrates messages through pictures and captions. Renaissance Web TV also understands this new conveyance and acceptance of information and plans to utilize comics, animation, illustrations, graphics and quick imagery in all shows in addition to a strong editorial background.

However, one of *Good's* major weaknesses is its relatively unorganized and chaotic Website. *Good* does not strictly focus on its Website and appears to allocate a large portion of its time and resources towards its print magazine, pamphlets and live events. Renaissance Web TV values the opportunity the Web provides in terms of spreading messages, encouraging interactivity among users, and creating new online formats. It plans to distinguish itself from many existing sites that offer forums/comments by modifying and improving their current functions and uses.

With many existing sites, interactive discussion or exchanges are relatively difficult given the vertical structure for posting or reading comments. When comments are posted on top of each other, the message eventually loses relevance with posts buried by sheer volume. This

type of structure is seen on some of the most popular sites including *The New York Times* and *The Huffington Post.* This outdated structure deters users from posting comments for one of two reasons: either there are hundreds of comments and adding one more will not seem to make a difference, or there are no comments so the post appears inactive. Either way, this structure leads towards a lack of public sphere participation. On the other hand, there are some existing sites that use more of a horizontal structure for posting comments or participation in forum discussions. These sites appear more successful because there is more opportunity for an exchange of thoughts and discussion on topics, as opposed to constantly moving down to the next comment. One site that serves as an appropriate example of this is Okayplayer.com, which is a blog dedicated to music discussion. Different topics for discussion are listed and people may go to any topic to participate. For each topic, the user is able to post a comment on a specific comment someone made, rather than just scroll down to the bottom of a long list; this is an example of a multi-dimensional comment structure. In addition, members are aware that celebrity artists regularly use the site, so that their comments or any expressed consensus are directly heard by the artists they hope to influence.

Renaissance Web TV will use technological and structural considerations for posts, comments, forums and chat sessions. However, it is equally important that the actual dialogue is cultivated and consistently circulated. This is where the three spheres of online communication would be balanced through specific methods. One way this will be achieved is through a collaboration of ideas expressed from professors, business professionals and individuals within the personal sphere. Individuals from different backgrounds who match desired capacities will be invited as writers for specific communication forums. The goal is to foster dialogue that will move forward beyond expression, and into an engaged thought process offering proposals and

ideas. Another method to ensure people that their voices are being heard is by forming mediated discussions with the different corporate or political structures that are being addressed in hopes for promising responses, possible resolutions and ultimately change. Therefore, the site engages people from different capacities and backgrounds to nourish meaningful dialogue that may lead towards results or action.

Chapter 4 – TREATMENT:

As an interactive online meeting place, Renwebchannel.com is intended to motivate a social movement for global awareness and local action, utilizing the youth and entertainment, the Worldwide Web as a medium for delivery and Web 2.0 as a tool for execution. Each day, the homepage will offer a featured program in the middle of the page that is displayed on a flat screen television. The viewer may either click on the daily featured program or go to the top of the page where a horizontal menu will contain four tabs: 1) Shows/Categories; 2) Schedule; 3) About Renaissance Web TV; 4) Join the Movement/Forums. When the viewer clicks on the "Shows" link, they will be directed to a full page that lists all the currently available programs classified by genre.

For example, the program *Musical Quest©* is listed under "Arts & Entertainment", while *Voices of Immigration©* is classified under "Social Causes". When a viewer proceeds to the "Schedule" link, a weekly grid will appear informing viewers when their favorite episodes are released by day and time. Under "Join the Movement," people have the capability to create or participate in discussion boards, enlist signatures for online petitions, organize events and send/receive invitations, post blogs and comments, critique homepage shows and start or participate in random online chats. Blogs will also be able to be imported to their profile pages,

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their own personal blogs, Facebook or MySpace profiles. Posting comments on the forum discussions will require that the user be logged-in such that each post identifies individuals by their username; a log-in option will be available in which, after being signed-in, they are directed to their personal profile pages or proceed elsewhere on the site. Lastly, when a viewer visits the "About Renaissance Web TV" tab, a scroll will appear so they can choose from the following: "About Us"; "Merchandise/Donations"; "Advertisement"; and "Contact Us".

Within members' profile pages, they can highlight causes that are important to them, critique programming, illustrate personal movie or television styles, as well as upload videos, blogs, photography, music, network, and send messages. Members' self-created videos will only be posted on their profile pages; the homepage remains strictly for an in-house produced line-up of programs. However, there are quarterly contests held for all members and the general public to participate in, and the winner's video will be posted on the homepage as a featured show. The members will be able to blog and comment on features and all videos they have watched. When members are signed-in, they will have a box on the bottom right corner on their page recommending other members who share similar viewing preferences, causes and friends. Members will also have the chance to take part in live chats once a week on featured programs.

4.1 Creative Treatment:

When deciding how information will be processed into knowledge one may look at Fisher's theory that all communication is a form of storytelling. Fisher's narrative paradigm asserts that people are essentially storytelling animals and reason is best appealed to through stories. However, these stories must have narrative coherence and fidelity (Fournier 2008). Coherence in that the story has internal consistency, and fidelity such that the story matches individuals' own beliefs and portrays the world in which they live in. Therefore, communication

through storytelling is a continuous process by which people perceive the world and narrate that personal experience to others.

Individuals want to hear a "good story." Renwebchannel.com's goal is to make storytelling an art form. Renaissance Web TV believes that people's reason is best appealed to through a story format, rather than preaching one-sided viewpoints to an audience or attempting to educate through argumentative debate. The Webchannel grapples with a broad range of issues from globalization to the environment, technology, immigration, climate change and energy to arts and entertainment. All these issues are narrated to the audience as "stories" with characters, plots, development, climax, conflict and resolution. In order for individuals to understand an issue at its core they must first listen. With argumentative formats, individuals view shows with preconceived notions and/or biases, ultimately merely listening to viewpoints that support their own beliefs, rather than open their minds and hearts to alternative perspectives.

Most of the episodes are presented through the eyes of individuals who are actually experiencing these issues/problems. For example, although immigration has become such a controversial issue, understanding this issue in an unbiased and comprehensive manner is often overlooked. Renwebchannel.com attempts to tackle the issue of immigration, as well as others, by explaining them via individuals experiencing this in the present, stressing its relevance to the general public, whether it be regarding student visas, illegal laborers, or the problems with the overall system. This story format is aimed at increasing awareness, which in turn, evokes empathy and the power to inspire. In short, inspiration from watching various shows on Renaissance Web TV is the impetus to encourage public sphere participation.

Chapter 5 – PROGRAMS:

For the purpose of this creative project, mini pilots have been created for some of the following shows listed below. Overall the programs are in the development and discussion stage with some such as *Women Rising Up©*, *Voices of Immigration©*, *Bookies and Winos©*, *Cooking with Culture©* and *World Without Borders©* further along in production. Once the programs are complete, each one will have thirteen episodes spanning from fifteen to thirty minutes in duration. The following is a brief synopsis for each program, with additional details available on request.

Voices of Immigration©

Voices of Immigration© in essence, tells peoples stories. People who experience, or continue to experience the complex issues associated with immigration. In each episode, viewers hear from people telling their own stories and experiences. Whether it be the immigrant seeking the American dream, to a student on a school visa, an illegal laborer or the American company that hired an immigrant employee. The focus is to examine a system that is both complex and controversial in nature and to attempt to make it both understandable, accessible and contribute to its transformation/improvement. Immigration has become a polarizing issue in America, and a "third rail" issue for most politicians for far too long. Whether one believes in amnesty or cement walls along the border, it is time to make sense of this issue and not simply succumb to the rhetoric surrounding it.

2042©

The program *2042©* emphasizes the year that will change the color and culture lines in America. Researchers predict that by the year 2042, minorities in America (e.g., Asians, Latinos and African Americans) will outnumber the Caucasian population. With this, it is imperative that we

examine the issues surrounding race in America. More specifically, to answer such a question as: What progress has this country made on equality, and how much more is left?; and What are some of the existing problems between different minorities? Each episode contains facts and statistics coupled with actual experiences, perspectives and honest discussion. In essence, *2042*© deliberates issues that continue to cause major tensions in race relations, while also highlighting areas of progress such as: use of the "N Word"; disparities between white and minority neighborhoods; prejudice within races; affirmative action; and the role of African American women given that black women account for 71 percent of all Master's degrees awarded to African Americans (Mueller, 2008, p. 170). Coverage from the Boston newspaper entitled *The Bay State Banner* will be used to develop the show's content.

Women Rising Up©

The show honors strong, successful women. Women who have worked hard, remained determined and passionate in their chosen fields, and who have given back either through philanthropy, their career, their community or through their families. The point of the show is not simply to feature the most prominent, well known women across the nation that are already household names. Rather, it is recognizing and celebrating women whom you could potentially interact with on a daily basis unaware of the important contributions they have made. Although many of these women have already risen to great heights, collectively, women are still rising up working to rise up together, and that is the goal of the program. Specifically, to recognize achievements made by great women in society while addressing issues that still need improvement so that, ultimately, women will be fairly and equally treated and represented in business, politics and society. Episodes will feature women in various professional fields including an attorney, restaurateur, doctor and teacher. The shows will provide historical context

to the specified field being covered. Each episode will end with a question and answer segment from young females pursuing similar professional goals.

World Without Borders©

World Without Borders© addresses major issues of relevance from national, regional and global perspectives, focusing on how the world's youth has the ability to lead in a unified effort towards progress. The program illuminates how all nations are interdependent; how one nation's policies, problems, actions and prosperity directly affect another's. Issues such as climate change, energy, economies, social development, free press, technology and globalization will be fully discussed and analyzed. Each episode will target a specific region that is aligned or affected by one of the issues mentioned above, and then explain the larger context surrounding the issue in relation to the global community. The concept of the program is to provide viewers with a clear understanding and correlation of world events, ultimately encouraging transnational awareness and cooperation. The purpose of *World Without Borders©* is for viewers to become informed, inspired and unified in global goals towards peace and prosperity.

Musical Quest©

The Purpose of *Musical Quest©* is to provide viewers with an original perspective on various forms of music that demonstrate the creative synergies via the collaboration of talented, skillful artists. This reality show features artists from various genres of music collaborating. For example, emphasizing the accentuated effects of combining Classical with Latin, Jazz with Hip Hop or Rock with Electronica. The music is not limited to American sound and culture: the producer/host might choose to add a Bollywood influence on one song and a Mediterranean flavor to another to increase music awareness. This goal will be accomplished through providing a comprehensive examination of the relationship between artists and music through the guidance

and mentorship of a talented, accomplished and naturally brilliant producer who is granted artistic freedom of expression.

Bookies & Winos©

Each season will feature a different type of book club with a diversity of members. The first season will feature, Elexir, an all women club with members between the ages of 35 and 60. One member within each club will act as the spokesperson leading the literary discussion for their four episodes. The literary discussions will cover topics such as character development, theme, plot, symbolism, setting and author intentions. However, it will be unscripted and focus on the dynamics of the members within this context. Based on popularity and feedback, viewers will be able to take part through Skype, online chats and mobile IM. Each episode will feature a different genre including: poetry, fiction, non-fiction, autobiography, short stories, as well as a discussion regarding the wine selected.

Cooking with Culture©

The show emphasizes the ease in preparing healthy, affordable meals from across the world. The host of the program is not a formally trained chef. Rather, it is an individual who has a natural affinity and enjoyment of cooking and eating. The meals featured will range in flavor from various regions including: the Mediterranean, Asia, the Middle East, Latin America, all which are presented with an "American Flair". The ease at which meals from these various cultures can be prepared using readily available ingredients from most supermarkets, the goal of *Cooking with Culture©* is to motivate and excite individuals to go outside of their "traditional recipe box" in the kitchen. By having a food enthusiast as the host of the program who has traveled around the globe, he will bring his love for food and foreign adventures into the U.S. kitchen. Viewers of all cooking levels will gain the confidence to follow the host's directions for new, easy meals;

the host will also recommend wine pairings. Viewers will escape the humdrum of cooking by adding cultural twists and healthy ingredients, all on a modest budget within a reasonable/minimal amount of time.

Movie Talk©

A leisurely, informal discussion on movies between film aficionados. The featured movies will be chosen based on specific themes, including successful and unsuccessful adaptations, independent films, blockbuster films and some by directors.

Political Animation, You be the Judge©

Some of the best politicians are those who are animated, whether in a good or not so good way. Some professional politicians can successfully dodge a question in which even the interviewer forgets the original question; or other politicians resist straight talk on substantive issues and know how to crack a joke or run on a tangent with rhetoric and there are the few noble bout who conduct their job with candor and hope. Regardless of which one, animated politicians make it much more fun and easy to listen to. This show covers politicians during CSpan, rallies, speeches and any coverage that catches a moment mentioned above or any other kind that deems animated. Then those same politicians are made into animated caricatures and the viewer votes on them in a game format. Blogs are attached to the animation to further elaborate the issues or politicians being satirized.

Chapter 6 – CONCLUSION:

> If this instrument is good for nothing but to entertain, amuse
> and insulate, then the tube is flickering now and we will soon
> see that the whole struggle is lost. This instrument can teach,
> it can illuminate; yes, and it can even inspire. But it can do so
> only to the extent that humans are determined to use it to those ends.
> Otherwise it is merely wires and lights in a box.

Edward R. Murrow, 1958

Fifty years ago Edward R. Murrow warned us that the medium of television will inspire

and illuminate only if people participate in the informational process and demand high standards

in broadcasting. Through Murrow's prescience he foresaw the dull, uninspired and static

television programming that is plaguing the public today, and knew the relevant implications that

would eventually transpire – including the deterioration of the public sphere. Television has

increasingly become an instrument merely to "entertain, amuse and insulate" as Murrow

predicted, and even the entertainment value is questionable since broadcast and cable have

drastic declining viewership. However, during its boom years in the 1950s, television was

viewed as a medium full of hope and possibility to further education and participation, similar to

the current, idealistic sentiment regarding the Internet. Therefore, we have entered into a new

technological age that beckons opportunity for reinstating material that will invoke public

participation to new heights.

Renaissance Web TV offers programming that will directly speak to people at their level

of intelligence. It does not believe in "dumbing-down" to the masses or submitting to networks'

boring bandwagon practices. It causes people to think, to empathize, to become inspired, and

become active participants in a public forum discussion. The ultimate goals of Renaissance Web

TV is to encourage social consciousness and a rejuvenation of debate and discussion in the

public sphere using not only the World Wide Web as a medium for hosting and viewing the material, but more importantly, through social interactivity from Web 2.0.

Internet icon and Web entrepreneur Marc Andreessen believes that consumers adapt to new technologies and are willing to change habits if a newly created product works better (Lacy, 2008). Andreessen points to the last fifteen years of technological advances, which consumers have rapidly embraced mobile phones, email, instant messages, the iPod, TiVo and E-commerce (Lacy, 2008). Web television is another product that will entice consumers onto new habits. In addition, television will become more interactive, mobile and consist of more variety and opportunity for people to contribute. Renwebchannel.com spotlights social causes, uplifts people, and provides a platform for people's voices to be heard and a place for them to speak and act. This overall learning process can only be achieved through the collaboration of the three spheres of online communication and Goodnight's three spheres of argument. Once the personal, technical and public spheres unite in efforts across the board on Renwebchannel.com, it will demonstrate that the Web has the influence and impact to invigorate the public sphere and foster global awareness. Viewers will not only watch, they will get inspired and "Join the Movement."

The Internet is the next technological platform that can make this giant leap, but only to the extent that people collectively protect it as an independent medium that remains inclusive and interactive. According to history, whether it was the telegraph, radio, or television, there is a small window of opportunity available before big business and government intrude with exuberant fees, licensing and regulations as a means to prevent ordinary citizens from participating on the medium. This is the opportune moment for people collectively to utilize the open platform of the Internet to improve communities, with the emergence of a new classical era full of thought and innovation.

This is a time of transition for business models within new media. Further studies recommended include assessing the implications of the Internet by asking, like Innis did, will this relatively new technology "democratize communications, breaking the monopoly of knowledge built up over the 20th century, and whether the social movements using the Internet will serve the test of time past the innovation stage?" (Comer, 2001). How can one generate revenue online and stay operating when the model of capitalism is changing from information communication technologies? Ultimately, can the Internet impede hierarchies of the media and sustain that progress to make it more democratic, interactive and engaging?

The potential exists for a new Renaissance, not limited to art or science, but businesses grounded on intellect, social development and an exchange of services and values as commodities.

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